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Killer seeks public money for appeal

Man convicted of kidnapping, sexually assaulting and killing Tori Stafford, 8, has asked that the public fund his appeal PAGE 10

YOU THINK YOU CAN OUT-TANTRUM ME? WOW, OK — LET'S GET NUTS

CHILDREN'S COACH AND AUTHOR TALKS CALMING KIDS AT CHRISTMAS TIME PAGE 23

BLAST OF WINTER

Snow crews were out in full force Monday, clearing off city pathways such as this one near Prince's Island Park and the Bow River. Some snow is expected today, possibly curtailing later in the day or Wednesday. See story, page 8. BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

City weed growers blow smoke in face of federal order

Marijuana reform.
Home grow operations illegal as of April

To the untrained eye, the 15 marijuana plants growing in Darla's basement look hardly different than the more common greenery she keeps upstairs.

She claims to have hypersensitivity to synthetic prescription drugs, adding "weed is the only thing that works" to combat restless legs syndrome, arthritis, chronic pain in her back and other ailments.

"To me, it's not a danger," she said while peeling back a tarp to reveal her operation during an exclusive tour of her Calgary home provided to Metro Monday.

"I had tomatoes growing in my kitchen all winter last year.... There's no difference. In fact, it's easier than tomatoes — a lot less work."

Metro agreed to withhold Darla's last name and the location of her home amid fears she could be targeted by both law-enforcement agencies and criminals alike.

She's actually been approved to grow three times as many plants, but maintains only enough to produce a few joints to smoke in the evening.

Even still, come April, her grow site and countless others hidden away from the public eye in Calgary homes will be declared illegal by Health Canada.

Quoted

"I had tomatoes growing in my kitchen all winter last year.... There's no difference. In fact, it's easier than tomatoes — a lot less work."

Darla,
on growing marijuana inside her Calgary home

But Darla and two other home-based marijuana growers speaking on condition of anonymity Monday said they see major flaws with the federal government's move to commercial operations.

Concerns surround the quality and supply of the marijuana that will be produced, the potential for rising costs and stringent guidelines about who will qualify for the medicinal program.

As a result, Darla said she's not doing away with her plants, even at the risk of going to jail, and may even consider digging out a more secluded space under her home to plant them.

But Health Canada said in a statement issued Monday it expects all current participants of its medicinal marijuana program to comply with the law, adding it will "provide guidance" on the responsibilities they have for disposing of plants and other products. The statement provided, however, did not specify how it would ensure compliance among current growers, given that Calgary police and municipal officials are not provided information on where sites like Darla's exist.

Fellow grower Mick, whose last name is also being withheld, said he's remaining optimistic that the federal government will call off the changes last minute.

"It's pretty daunting — I don't even want to think about it," he said. "I would rather go back to the black market than ever purchase from these private companies."

If the reforms go through, Mick said he would likely get rid of his plants, but added he has little money to remediate his property should concerns with air-quality and the prevalence of mould be raised.

Calgary police Staff Sgt. Tom Hanson said last month there's also the potential that former grow sites could be targeted by criminals even after the plants are long gone.

Darla said, however, not even her neighbours know about her current grow site, adding she more fears that the federal government will give into police pressure and breach her privacy.

"It feels like it will come down to that," she said. "They're going to throw us all in jail and that's where we're going to retire."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

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'A contract is a contract'

Contractor loses $3.7M for southeast ring road delays

Alberta's transportation ministry has stuck to the contract-specified penalties for Calgary's delayed southeast ring road leg, cutting nearly $3.7 million in earnings for the contractor group behind the project.

The road network, which adds 25 kilometres of roadway across six lanes of divided highway, was originally scheduled to open Oct. 1. But contractor group Chinook Roads Partnership (CRP) blamed poor weather conditions and outlying safety audits for a more than seven-week delay — the leg eventually opened Nov. 22.

All told, CRP was to net $768 million from the project, meaning its overall earnings were reduced less than half a per cent. Originally, chief executive Dale Woodroffe had indicated he didn't believe his group was the only one to blame for delays in opening and, as a result, he wanted to negotiate the penalty. But he sang a different tune when reached Monday.

"We've taken the penalty already and we're just moving on right now," Woodroffe said, adding Mother Nature could still pose problems for other off-road work on the project that will be undertaken by his group over the next year.

CRP will also continue to perform required maintenance on the network for three decades.

Alberta Transportation's Parker Hogan confirmed a $3,657,731.79 penalty had been applied, adding "a contract is a contract."

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Samantha Lawson was one of several riders who spoke glowingly of the West LRT line while waiting at Calgary's only underground station Monday. BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

West LRT: Calgary Transit's darling

One-year anniversary. Line drew 7,500 new daily trips in its first year — equivalent to hauling 6,000 cars off the roads, according to transit figures

BRYAN WEISMILLER
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It's been one year since the West LRT officially hit the rails, and Calgary Transit officials credit the C-Train line for an uptick in ridership — while admitting there's still plenty of room to grow.

The west line, combined with related bus-route tweaks, reportedly roped in 7,500 new riders each weekday or the equivalent of hauling 6,000 cars off the roads, according to transit figures to be released in a one-year anniversary report.

"We have attracted 12 per cent more transit customers throughout the area, removed a fairly significant number of cars off the road and we've made much better transit connections within and outside of the community," said transit planning manager Neil McKendrick.

However, McKendrick also acknowledged the six-stop West LRT sees the lowest daily ridership per station. The south track, Calgary's longest, shuttles roughly 123,000 riders every day — more than double the number of riders per stop compared to the west leg.

"We've still got a little ways to go here to match those kind of numbers," he said.

Those waiting at the underground Westbrook Station were upbeat on Monday, telling Metro they've trimmed anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour off their daily commutes since last December.

Still, some cited ways to improve service.

Samantha Lawson pointed out there's still a lack of parking, with the reserved lots at Sirocco and 69th Street S.W. stations consistently full.

"It's been so good — except there needs to be more park and ride," Lawson said. "You'll probably hear that from a lot of people."

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Distracted driving a factor in 2% of local crashes

Calgary collision reports indicate nearly 700 collisions have resulted from distracted driving in 2013, and that only includes incidents where police or the driver at fault reported inattentiveness behind the wheel. METRO FILE

Crackdown. Police deem blitz a success, could conduct more

Calgary police say distracted driving has been a factor in hundreds of collisions this year — and that's only counting incidents where a motorist reported taking their eyes off the road or were observed doing so by an officer.

As of Monday, police said 685 of 33,451 reports have identified distracted driving as being a factor, but not necessarily always the primary cause, in a collision.

While that only amounts to two per cent of crashes, Insp. Michael Watterston said the data likely only provides a small window into a lingering problem, given that guilty drivers tend to avoid coming clean if they weren't paying proper attention.

Police teamed up last week to blitz Calgary streets in both uniform and plainclothes in a crackdown on motorists talking on the phone, texting or performing other unsafe activities while driving.

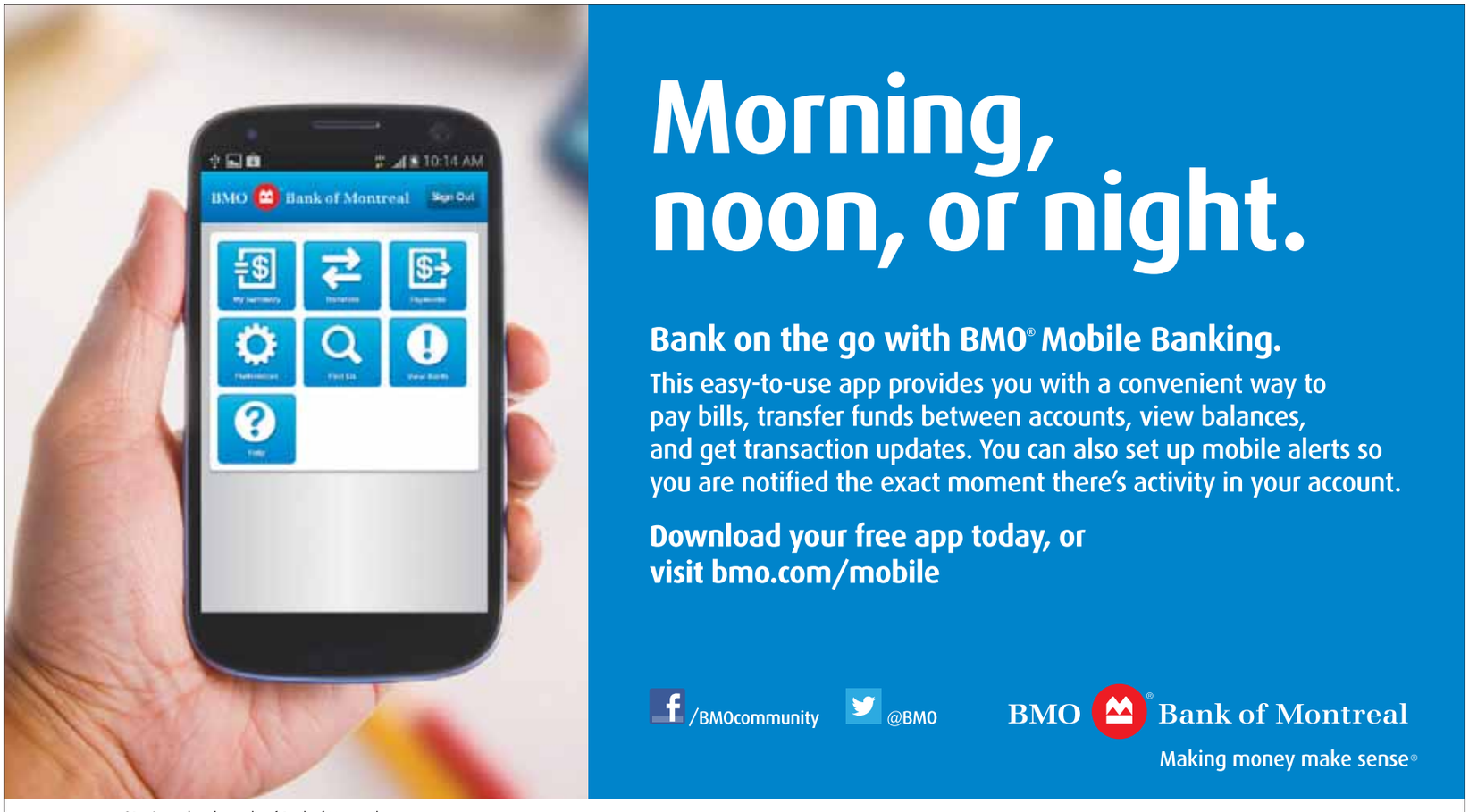
The effort led to 465 fines, more than police have issued in whole months in the past.

"We got a sense from this experience that more messaging will have to go out and, possibly, we'll have to do more blitzes," Watterston said.

Alberta Transportation in January 2012 began requiring police to specify on collision reports whether distracted driving was a factor, according to spokesperson Donnae Schuhltz. She said the data is being collected for a long-term study on the prevalence of distracted driving, adding the ministry would likely only begin reviewing it at the end of 2014.

The fine issued for distracted driving in Alberta is $172.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO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Cops turning to TV to distract prisoners in downtown lockup

Arrestees can now watch SportsCentre from their holding cells at Calgary's downtown police lockup, as authorities experiment with ways to calm a sometimes unruly crowd.

At least three TVs were installed at the police arrest-processing unit in the past year and — based on success — the pilot project may be considered in early plans for a new facility, said Staff Sgt. Jolayne Anderson.

Anderson praised the initiative for reducing violence and protecting staff.

"They're sitting watching TV and they're not paying attention to each other," she said Monday. "It has a total calming effect.

Anderson was keen to note full-out brawls aren't common inside the holding cells.

The TVs came with a $700 price-tag and cost roughly $150 each year, according to the Calgary Police Service. In addition to sports highlights, authorities can air Crime Stoppers, Alcoholics Anonymous and other self-help services.

Calgary John Howard Society executive director Gordon Sand backed the service and suggested it be expanded to include other information, such as how to get a lawyer.

"It's a win-win," said Sand, whose organization supports prison reform. "They can avoid fighting and other upsets — and watch TV.

"You wonder why provincial jails took their TVs out."

The Calgary police court services section, located on 7 Ave SE, holds those newly arrested and charged until they can get a bail hearing.

BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

Trial. Praise for Calgary's new community planning

Calgary's trial method of planning new communities seems to be working well so far, council heard Monday, with additional developers expressing interest in participating in the process, even though they would be responsible for footing many of the bills.

Currently, two "developer-funded area structure plans" (ASPs) are underway — one in the far northeast and one in the deep southeast of the city.

Landowners are working with city staff to conduct public engagements and lay the groundwork for policies that will eventually guide the development of 3,300 acres of land into homes for nearly 80,000 people.

"I've heard a lot of great comments both from some of our administration but also from the landowners about how well this process has been working," said Coun. Jim Stevenson, whose ward includes the northeast ASP.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Access Calgary rides now available without $20 fee

Cost unknown. 'One-kilometre rule' applied to some houses but not others on same street

ROBSON FLETCHER
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City council has killed the $20 surcharge that used to be tacked on to Access Calgary rides for mobility-impaired Calgarians who needed to be picked up or dropped off at locations more than a kilometre from a regular transit stop.

Scrapping the so-called "one-kilometre rule" was simply a matter of fairness, according to Coun. Richard Pootmans and Coun. Brian Pincott, who co-sponsored the motion.

"In Canada, only Halifax and Winnipeg have similar restrictions," Pootmans said. "All other larger cities than Calgary manage to provide this service."

Their colleagues around the council table agreed, voting unanimously in support of the motion — but not without first expressing some hesitation about the expense, which remains unknown.

Coun. Andre Chabot said he was uncomfortable effectively signing a "blank cheque" for the added service and would prefer to have a "certain number," but one simply was not available since it's unclear exactly how many people would use this service and how often.

Transportation manager Mac Logan said 95 per cent of Calgarians live within 400 metres of a bus stop.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi noted there has been an "incredibly wide range" of cost estimates associated with scrapping the one-kilometre rule — anywhere from $100,000 to $500,000 annually — but added the high end of that range is unlikely.

"I think we have to bite the bullet and implement this," said Coun. Jim Stevenson.

"It's the only fair thing to do," he said.

"We don't know what the cost will be for some time, but I think, unfortunately, we have to go forward with the chequebook open."

Jung-Suk Ryu, communications manager for CNIB Alberta, said many clients in Calgary have expressed concerns about the one-kilometre rule.

"We're concerned about those who have significant vision loss who have trouble accessing services because of this restriction," Ryu said.

Accessibility

"They become increasingly more isolated by not being able to engage with the community.... It's all about being able to contribute and participate in society."

Lui Greco, director of government relations and advocacy for CNIB Alberta, on the problems that arise for people when transportation is not accessible

Lui Greco, director of government relations and advocacy for CNIB Alberta, said he rides the LRT daily but many people with vision impairment rely on the specialized transit service of Access Calgary. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Delayed to 2014

'Guidebook' for city development not official yet

Proposed changes to Calgary's central planning document — which would, among other things, mandate levels of density and diverse types of housing in new neighbourhoods — will remain just a proposal until the new year.

Instead of debating and voting on the New Community Planning Guidebook, which would amend Calgary's Municipal Development Plan, council voted 9-5 to put the matter off to early 2014.

Chief city planner Rollin Stanley told council most of the policies in the amendment are already applied when the city does individual area structure plans.

Coun. Jim Stevenson, however, wanted to see council act sooner, noting that city staff have already done lots of work with the development industry in crafting the document.

"There's a lot of work that's gone into this and there's been a lot of agreement," he said. "I believe that we should be able to move forward."

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

A concept image of what Decidedly Jazz Danceworks' proposed Dance Centre would look like upon completion. COURTESY HELEN MOORE-PARKHOUSE

Dance group nearly set for $18M centre

Jazz dancers could soon have a snazzy new centre in Calgary's Beltline to train and perform in.

Decidedly Jazz Danceworks will go before a city committee this week to clear the final hurdle standing in the way of its $17.9-million Dance Centre, which would be developed as part of a joint expansion plan at Kahanoff Centre.

If councillors approve the project and a $5.46-million draw out of Calgary's municipal sustainability initiative funding pool, construction could begin next month, according to executive director Kathi Sundstrom.

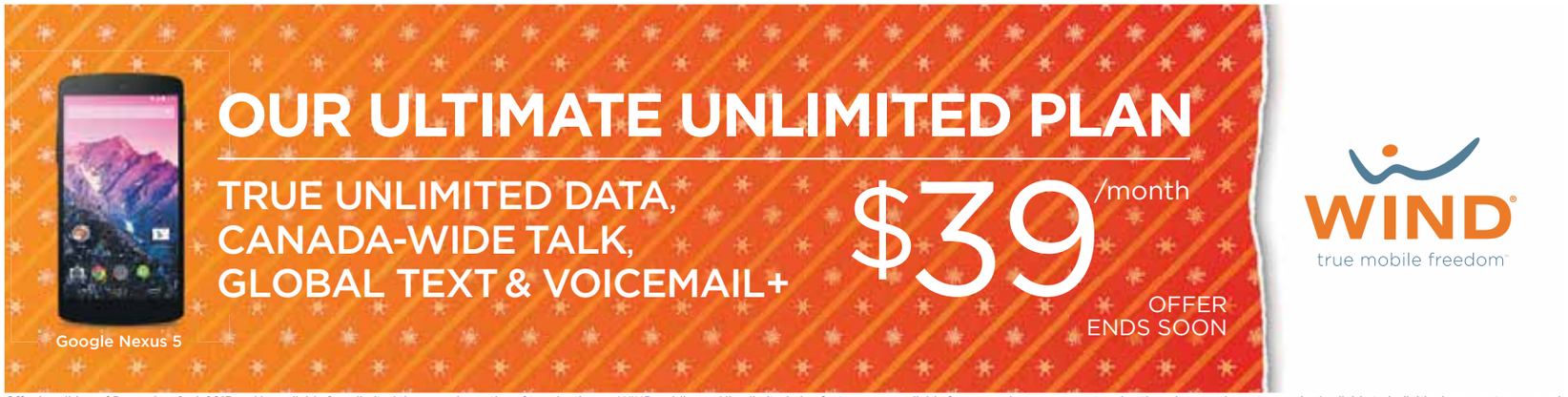
She said Decidedly Jazz's current headquarters, also located in the Beltline, features just 9,000 square feet of space and three studios, whereas the new site would include seven studios and nearly four times the room to operate in.

"This has been in the works for a number of years because we are seeing rising demand for programs," she explained Monday.

The centre would also provide Decidedly Jazz with its very own 200-seat performance hall, allowing its dancers, who range in age from two to 82, more chances to strut their stuff in front of a live audience.

Funding for the centre was also provided by the federal and provincial governments, the Kahanoff Centre and public donations.

JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO



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Fur-ever Homes. Neglect cited in charge against local dog rescue group

Fur-ever Homes Rescue Society president Carmen Elaraj defended her organization Monday after it was hit with a neglect charge.

"The most important thing to know is that there are two sides to this story," Elara said in an email to Metro. "We will have the opportunity to share our side in January.

"We will continue to rescue animals in need — and thank all of our supporters."

She didn't reply to requests for an interview.

The Calgary Humane Society said the charge, laid Monday, stems from "distress caused to a dog over a three-day period" in September 2013.

Manager of Cruelty Investigations, Brad Nichols, said the humane society was alerted to the issue by a concerned party.

The charges relate to "neglect of an injury," although Nichols didn't specify further, citing ongoing court proceedings.

Carmen Elaraj launched Fur-ever Homes Rescue Society after a trip to Mexico in 2011, according to the company's website. SCREENGRAB

Elaraj is scheduled to appear in court on Jan. 27.

Fur-ever Homes places dogs in private foster homes or cares for them at a volunteer-run facility, according to its website.

BRYAN WEISMILLER/METRO

Safe. Calgary campers located after going missing in Kananaskis

A man and woman reported missing after going camping in Kananaskis Country over the weekend made contact with a family member by cellphone Monday afternoon but remained lost in the woods for some time before making their way to safety in the evening, according to Calgary police.

"One of the missing persons contacted their mother," Duty Insp. Darrell Hesse said Monday afternoon. "We believe that they're alive and to be in good health at this point."

Melody Forrest and Garrick Wright initially headed out to Kananaskis on Saturday and were expected to return by Sunday.

Police issued a missing-persons report Monday afternoon but then the campers managed to contact a family member by cellphone.

The two eventually made their way to a road and were picked up by a passing driver, who took them to Bragg Creek, according to police.

ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

A look at the City of Calgary road cams during the Monday morning commute. CONTRIBUTED

Winter blast wreaks havoc on local roads

Cold snap. Vehicular collisions, road closures and public transit delays blamed on wintry conditions

BRYAN WEISMILLER
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Blizzard conditions were blamed for the vehicular carnage reported Monday in Calgary and on southern Alberta highways.

And with the cold snap and wintry conditions expected to drag out overnight, the city warned of a potential citywide snow-route parking ban.

Police were forced to shut down northbound Stoney Trail at 96th Avenue NE during the evening rush hour around 4:30 p.m. amid reports of a 24-vehicle collision. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

"I haven't seen roads this bad in a couple years — at least in the Airdrie area," said Sheriff Jason Graw with the Airdrie Integrated Traffic Unit.

Authorities of all stripes warned commuters to stay off the roads.

There were other collisions on Stoney earlier in the day as well

"Clearly the roads are in poor condition, so it's not uncommon during this type of weather system for us to see an increase in collisions," said Police Insp. Darrell Hesse.

"Fortunately for us, we haven't any reports of serious injuries."

Several other highways were closed throughout the day — including Highway 1 from Stoney Trail in Calgary to Highway 36 near Brooks involving multiple transport truckers.

It's unclear if the major roadway would reopen Tuesday morning.

Back in Calgary, snow forced the closure of several schools and cancellation of flights, and spurred major delays on the public transit system.

WITH FILES FROM JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO CALGARY

Snow ahead

Environment Canada is forecasting about 2 centimetres of snow in Calgary on Tuesday with a high of -15 C expected and a wind chill of -29 C.

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UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said, at a news conference in Geneva, Switzerland, on Monday, that human rights abuses in Syria are being documented by UN investigators. SALVATORE DI NOLFI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Evidence implicates Assad in Syrian war crimes, says UN

Human rights.
Allegations add pressure for action on nearly 3-year-old civil war that has killed 100,000

A growing body of evidence collected by UN investigators points to the involvement of senior Syrian officials, including President Bashar Assad, in crimes against humanity and war crimes, the UN's top human rights official said Monday.

The statement by Navi Pillay, who heads the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, adds to the pressure for quicker action on Syria ahead of a key peace conference planned for Geneva in January. The conference, brought on by combined UN, U.S. and Russian diplomacy, would for the first time bring the Assad government and opponents together for face-to-face negotiations.

"As we look around the world at the end of 2013, we see examples of situations where that readiness of the international community to act in time is already being sorely tested," Pillay told a news conference.

"In addition to Syria, where the scale and viciousness of the abuses being perpetrated by elements on both sides almost defies belief, the situation in the Central African Republic is deteriorating rapidly."

Pillay said the Syrian abuses — suspected massacres, chemical attacks, torture, rape and a litany of other horrors — are being well documented by an expert UN panel of investigators.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Straight to the top

"The evidence indicates responsibility at the highest level of government, including the head of state."

Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, on war crimes in Syria.

Video captures eagle's caper

A brazen bird snatched a video camera that was recording crocodiles in northwest Australia and captured fascinating footage of its 110-kilometre journey across the country's remote landscape.

Wildlife rangers in Western Australia's Kimberley region released video on Monday that reveals the sea eagle's caper. The bird's flapping wings can be seen as it grabs the device and takes off, and the eagle later poses for a selfie, poking its face into the camera lens.

Rangers set up the motion-sensor camera along the Margaret River in May, hoping to record images of crocodiles. The device was recently found near the Mary River, about 110 kilometres away. When rangers examined the video inside, the real culprit was revealed. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An eagle pecks at a camera that rangers had set up along a river, after the bird took off and flew with it, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. COURTESY KIMBERLEY LAND COUNCIL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Student suicide streamed online

An Ontario university has confirmed a fire was deliberately set in one of its dorms and is urging the public to avoid a suicide video of the event posted online.

It is believed a man who attempted suicide by taking pills and lighting his dorm room on fire — and streamed video of the event online — is a 20-year-old student at the University of Guelph.

On Saturday, a man identified only as "Stephen" posted a message on 4chan's /b/ board, one of the Internet's most diverse communities.

"Tonight I will be ending my own life. I've been spending the last hour making the preparations and I'm ready to go through with it. As an oldfag who's been on 4chan since 2004, I thought I would finally give back to the community in the best way possible: I am willing to an hero on cam for you all," wrote Stephen.

In 4chan parlance, "an hero" is slang for committing suicide.

A video stream was set up and users watched as Stephen swallowed some unidentified pills and chased them with vodka. He then proceeded to start a fire in his room and curl up in bed.

Stephen continued to post to the stream's live chat, typing messages like "#imdead" and "#omgimonfire."

Eventually, firefighters stormed in and rescued the man.

Although initial reports attempted to link the incident to a house fire in Pittsburgh, it now appears that Stephen is a student at the University of Guelph. Firefighters were on campus Saturday night and took one victim to hospital with serious burns.

The fire call came in approximately 90 minutes after Stephen's first post on 4chan.

The university has since confirmed that the fire was deliberately set by a 20-year-old student in Dundas Hall.

"The university is aware that there is disturbing social media activity circulating about this incident and is urging people not to watch or distribute this hurtful material," read a statement.

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO ONLINE

School response

"The university ... is urging people not to watch or distribute this hurtful material."

University of Guelph statement

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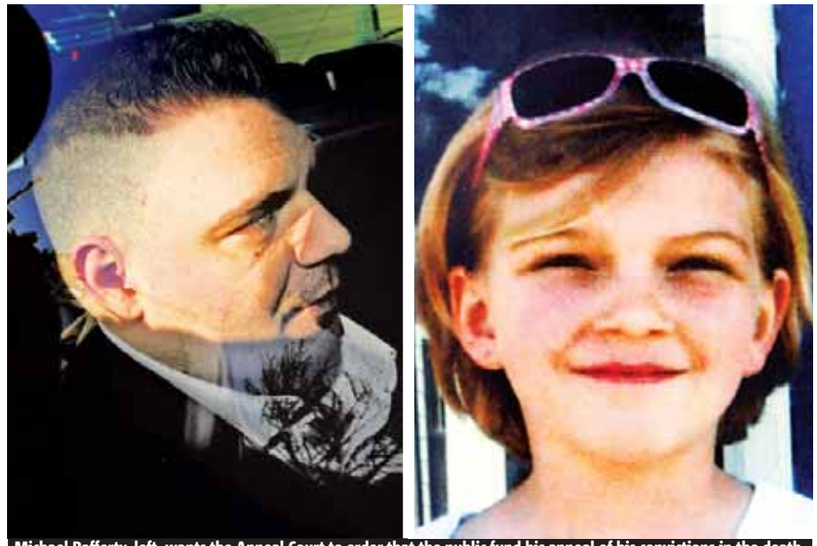
Rafferty seeks public money to fund appeal

Victoria Stafford murder. Michael Rafferty can't afford legal help but needs it to appeal complex murder case, his lawyer argues



Michael Rafferty, left, wants the Appeal Court to order that the public fund his appeal of his convictions in the death of eight-year-old Victoria Stafford, right. LEFT: DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE; RIGHT: CONTRIBUTED

The jury that convicted Michael Rafferty of killing eight-year-old Victoria Stafford should have considered that he might have been only an accessory after the fact to her brutal murder, Ontario's Appeal Court was told Monday.

The argument was part of lawyer Paul Calarco's attempt to convince the court that there is merit to an appeal of Rafferty's convictions for first-degree murder, sexual assault causing bodily harm and kidnapping.

Rafferty wants the Appeal Court to order that the public fund his appeal, which Calarco argues is too complex for Rafferty to handle by himself. Rafferty can't afford to hire a lawyer and has been turned down four times by Legal Aid since his convictions in May 2012.

Rafferty's trial heard that he and his former girlfriend, Terri-Lynne McClintic, lured Victoria from her school in Woodstock, Ont., and drove to a secluded field, where the Grade 3 student was sexually assaulted and brutally beaten to death in April 2009.

It's "absolutely vital" that every person have the right to a fair trial and a proper appeal, Calarco said.

"That applies no matter if the person is one for whom the public has sympathy... or a person the public has no sympathy for," he said.

Appeal Court Justice Marc Rosenberg reserved his decision, but he can either dismiss Rafferty's motion, request that Legal Aid fund a lawyer or order that the money should come from the Ministry of the Attorney General.

Rafferty had been serving his life sentence at Kingston Penitentiary, but after the notorious prison closed this year, he was moved to an institution in Quebec, Calarco said, though he wouldn't say which one.

McClintic is also serving a life sentence for first-degree murder. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Grounds for appeal?

The trial judge made three errors, lawyer Paul Calarco told the court.

- McClintic made conflicting statements about whether she or Rafferty delivered the fatal blows to Tori. If she was the "principal offender," then Rafferty's actions would make him an accessory after the fact.
- Superior Court Judge Thomas Heeney erred by not giving the jury a Vetrovec warning, which cautions juries about the testimony of untrustworthy witnesses.
- The third ground that Calarco said points to the merit of Rafferty's appeal is another issue regarding McClintic's conflicting evidence. "This is a person who is totally capable of deceit," Calarco said. "This is not a person you can put any faith in."
- Crown attorney Randy Schwartz opposed the motion, arguing that the appeal is not particularly complex and doesn't raise novel points of law.

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MLA in hot water over photo with blackface Christmas character

Halifax. MLA says he now realizes traditional character 'Black Pete' may be inappropriate

HALEY RYAN
Metro in Halifax

Liberal MLA Joachim Stroink gets emotional as he takes questions from the media at the Liberal office Monday after receiving criticism for a photo, seen at right, that he posted on Twitter. JEFF HARPER/METRO IN HALIFAX

The Liberal MLA for Halifax-Chebucto fought back tears Monday as he spoke with media about a photo of himself sitting on the lap of a blackface Christmas character he had posted to Twitter and later removed due to the backlash.

Joachim Stroink tweeted the image of himself at a Dutch Christmas event with Zwarte Piet, or "Black Pete," on Sunday evening

"This is a Dutch tradition I grew up with and never, ever in my deepest heart, ever thought that this would be portrayed in this manner," Stroink said. "There was no malicious intent whatsoever."

The debate around Pete intensified this year after cultural experts with the United Nations began examining whether the tradition is racist. People in the Netherlands are also divided, with some protesting the character and others declaring Zwarte Piet a symbol of Christmas fun.

Stroink said the negative attention he was getting on Monday "hurts in many ways," because he's had to realize parts of his own culture might be at odds with the African Nova Scotian citizens he represents as a politician.

Stroink said he realizes there is "no place" for blackface in Nova Scotia culture and it could be that Zwarte Piet is no longer appropriate. Stroink met with Tony Ince, a black member of the legislature and the minister of African Nova Scotian affairs, to discuss updating the tradition.

Questioning tradition

'Black Pete' sparks debate

The Dutch character is the servant of St. Nicholas or "Sinterklaas" according to a traditional song, and is often shown wearing blackface makeup, red lipstick and a frizzy "Afro" wig.

Christopher Helland, a sociology of religion professor at Dalhousie University, said the photo may not have been such an issue without social media, but added online debates are good because they allow people who aren't usually heard to express their concerns. METRO

Brazeau lands new gig as Parliament Hill reporter

Suspended senator Patrick Brazeau has found work as a freelance reporter for the Halifax edition of Frank Magazine, despite having no prior journalism experience.

Brazeau openly solicited work on Twitter after he and fellow senators Mike Duffy and Pamela Wallin were suspended in early November over their questionable expense claims.

The satire and gossip magazine announced its newest hire Monday.

Brazeau dropped off his application for accreditation to the parliamentary press gallery in person Monday afternoon. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Patrick Brazeau applies for membership to the parliamentary press gallery at the National Press Building in Ottawa on Monday. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Manitoba

Opposition leader wishes 'infidel atheists' a happy holiday

A video by a citizen journalist of Manitoba's Opposition leader Brian Pallister has left online commentators divided as to whether his comments are insulting or an awkward attempt at humour.

In the recording, Pallister offers seasonal greetings to Christians, Jews and others: "All you infidel atheists out there, I want to wish you the very best also," the Progressive Conservative leader says.

"I don't know what you celebrate during the holiday season. I myself celebrate the birth of Christ, but it's your choice, and I respect your choice. If you wish to celebrate nothing and just get together with friends, that's good, too."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Min Thu, 17, a Myanmar army boy soldier, walks in a swamp in Chaung Tha, Irawaddy, where he used to spend days hiding fearing arrest after running away from the army, in this Nov. 3 photo. GEMUNU AMARASINGHE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Myanmar still recruiting child soldiers: Activists

Reforming the army. 500 boys discharged so far, some as young as 11, are just a small proportion of the total, UN official says

He disappeared when he was 12 years old, a skinny fifth-grader named Min Thu from the wrong side of town who thought he'd stumbled onto the golden ticket.

A swaggering, potbellied businessman in Chaung Tha, Myanmar, offered him an escape from a neighbourhood where the houses are made of lumberyard scraps and the air smells of fish and decay and woodsmoke.

It ended with four years in the army.

Thu, now a stone-faced 17-year-old, joined thousands of boys who have been swallowed up over the years by Myanmar's army.

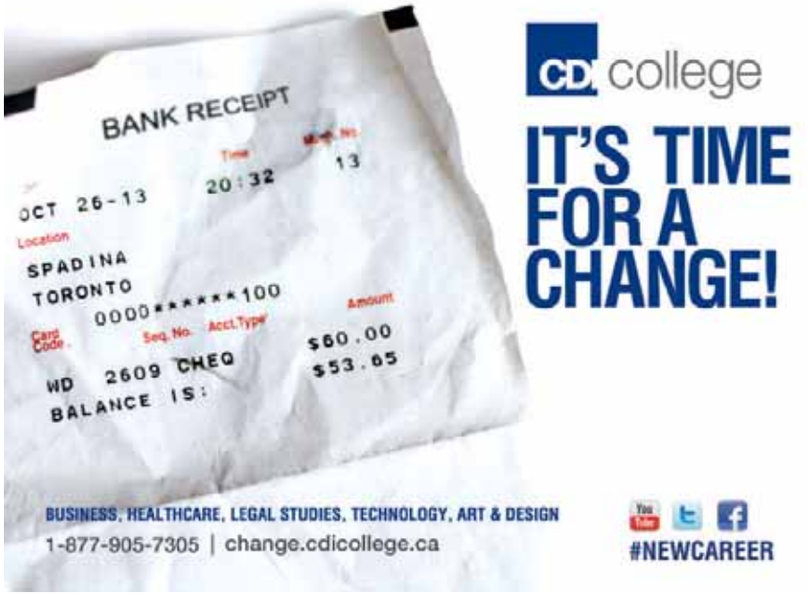
Over the next four years Thu would spend countless days carrying supplies and working on army-owned farms. He saw people die, in combat and in training. He'd see much of his $30-a-month salary taken by his superiors.

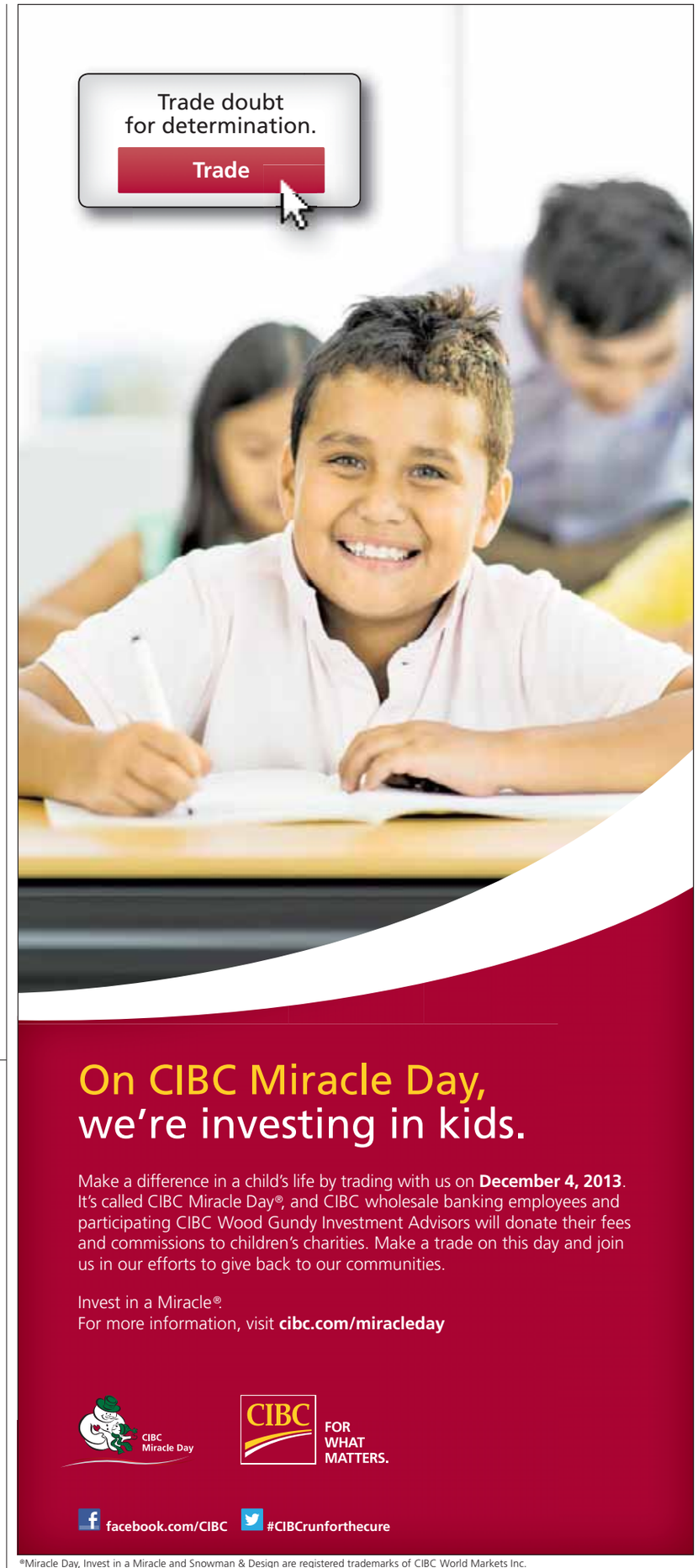
As Myanmar shifts away from decades of military rule, emerging as a quasi-democracy where generals still wield immense political power, the government craves international respectability. Political prisoners have been freed, censorship has been abolished and, the government promises, the days of child soldiers are over.

The United Nations and local rights activists say recruiting of underage soldiers has gone down, but many boys remain in the army, despite a government agreement to clear the military of anyone under age 18 by Dec. 1. Some have been taken in just the past few months.

Still, a system has been created to get children out of the army. If a boy soldier — or more likely his family — is able to contact an activist or international aid group, a bureaucratic process can be started leading to the boy's discharge.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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N.Y. derailment. Train was travelling 52 m.p.h. over the speed limit

A commuter train that derailed over the weekend, killing four passengers, was hurtling at 82 m.p.h. as it entered a 30 m.p.h. curve, a federal investigator said Monday. But whether the wreck was the result of human error or brake trouble was still unclear, he said.

Asked why the train was going so fast, National Transportation Safety Board member Earl Weener said, "That's the question we need to answer."

Weener said the information on the locomotive's speed was preliminary and extracted from the Metro-North train's two data recorders, taken from the wreckage after the Sunday morning accident in the Bronx.

He also said investigators had begun interviewing the crew members, but he would not disclose what the engineer had told them.

He said investigators were also examining the engineer's cellphone — apparently to determine whether he was operating the train while distracted.

Asked whether the tragedy because of human error or bad brakes, Weener said, "The answer is, at this point in time, we can't tell." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ottawa

New regulations ahead for prepaid credit cards

Ottawa is moving ahead with new regulations on so-called prepaid credit cards, but not in time for the holiday shopping season.

A source says the federal government will bring in an array of regulations governing prepaid cards, including an end to expiry dates and a prohibition on charging maintenance fees for the first year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Netanyahu under fire for high-rolling ways

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looks up as he arrives for a private audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican on Monday.

RICCARDO DE LUCA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's all about the Benjamins. Israeli PM raised taxes, slashed services while spending thousands on candles and flowers

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's penchant for scented candles is setting off a stink, with media and politicians accusing him Monday of extravagantly spending public money.

According to a document obtained by a civil liberties group, in 2012, Netanyahu spent $1,700 on scented candles, $23,300 on flower arrangements and $31,600 on gardening at his official residence in Jerusalem, among other costs totalling about $909,000.

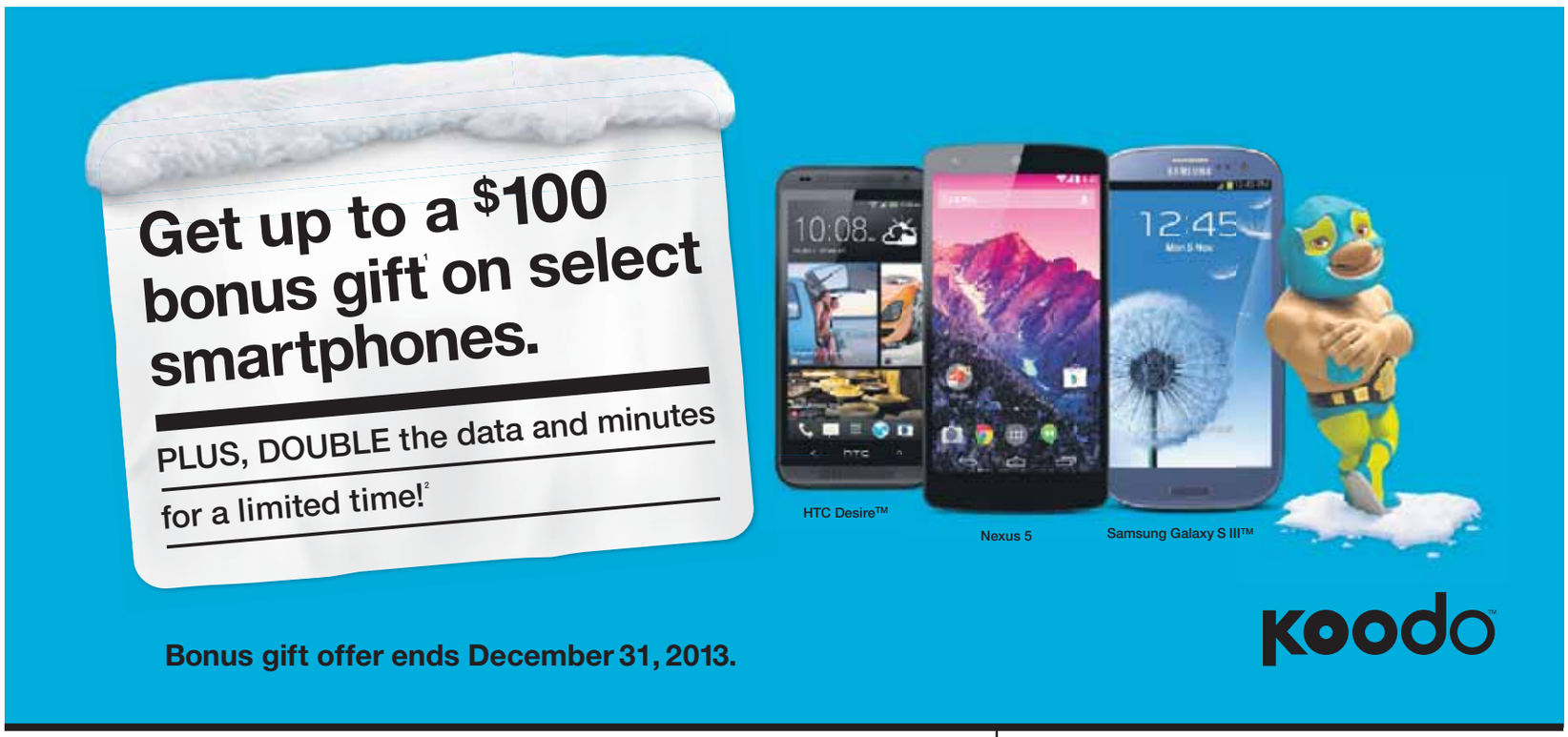
The report threatens to embarrass Netanyahu, whose government raised taxes and slashed services earlier this year to decrease a budget deficit.

"When the prime minister presents such inflated and absurd amounts in the expense sheet to the nation, he can't look at his citizens in the eye and swear that there must be cuts to their welfare, health care, security and education," wrote Arye Aplatoni in the Maariv daily.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More details

- Netanyahu was also shown to spend $11,800 on laundry and $41,600 on catering at his residence.
- The water bill for his vacation home amounted to more than $22,000, and the electrical bill hit $7,390.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(1) Bonus gift will vary by store location. See store for full details. Bonus gift available with new activations only. While quantities last. (2) See store for details.

This image provided by Amazon.com shows the Prime Air unmanned aircraft project. AMAZON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Here come the Amazon.com drones

This is not a joke. By 2018, the world's largest online retailer aims to deliver your order to your door via a drone

Amazon.com is working on a way to get packages to customers in 30 minutes or less — via self-guided drone.

Consider it the modern version of a pizza delivery boy, minus the boy.

Amazon.com said it's working on the so-called Prime Air unmanned aircraft project in its research and development labs. But the company says it will take years to advance the technology and for the Federal Aviation Administration to create the necessary rules and regulations.

The project was first reported by CBS' 60 Minutes Sunday night.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The specs

- The drones can carry packages that weigh up to five pounds, which covers about 86 per cent of the items Amazon delivers.
- Amazon is testing the drones to have a range of about 17 kilometres, which could cover a significant portion of the population in urban areas.

Calling for $15/hr.
Can I get a living wage with that fast-food job?

Fast-food workers in about 100 U.S. cities will walk off the job this Thursday, protest organizers say, which would mark the largest effort yet in a push for higher pay.

The actions would build on a campaign that began about a year ago to call attention to the difficulties of living on the American federal minimum wage of $7.25 US an hour.

Protesters are calling for pay of $15 US an hour, although many see the figure as a rallying point rather than a near-term possibility.

It's not clear what the actual turnout will be, or whether the walkouts will be enough to disrupt restaurants' operations. Similar actions this summer had varying results, with some restaurants briefly unable to serve customers and others seemingly unaffected.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In August, protests were held outside a McDonald's. Another round of demonstrations are set for Thursday. RICHARD DREW/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Cost rose 6.9%

On the 13th day of Christmas came the $114,651 Visa bill

The price of buying lords-a-leaping for your true love jumped this year. If you buy all 364 items repeated throughout the carol The Twelve Days of Christmas, you'll pay $114,651 US, 6.9 per cent more than 2012.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
93.98¢ (-0.18¢)

TSX
13,419.57 (+24.17)

OIL
$93.82 US (+$1.10)

GOLD
$1,221.90 US (-$28.50)

Natural gas: $3.97 US (+6¢)
Dow Jones: 16,008.77 (-77.64)

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BLACK FRIDAY LEAVES A BLACK MARK

SHE SAYS

Jessica Napier
metronews.ca

For five days straight my email inbox has received an uninterrupted deluge of sale announcements and promotional messages touting can't-miss markdowns on everything from leather jackets to hotel rooms to sushi platters.

From Black Friday Eve (previously known as American Thanksgiving) through to Cyber Monday, my cellphone has served as an annoying reminder of our collective obsession with discounted consumer goods and my own inability to remove myself from email lists.

You'd think Canadians would have been spared from this fabricated "holiday." But even though our Thanksgiving came and went over a month ago, Canadian retailers just had to get their own slice of that profitable retail pie. Wait — I should probably avoid "pie" references as they might conjure up images of families spending time together, when in fact 'tis the season for saving 40 per cent off flat-screen TVs.

I get it, stuff is expensive, and when that same stuff becomes not so expensive for a limited time, it's tempting to try and cash in on those savings. But the whole Black Friday thing has gotten out of control.

How does a simple holiday sale transform an average group of people into a stampeding herd who will stop at nothing to validate their self-worth through the accumulation of designer clothing and brand-name electronics?

In 2008, a 34-year-old Walmart employee died in Long Island after being trampled to death by hordes of impatient shoppers waiting to enter the store.

One of the worst things about this heinous event is that the bargain hunters — upon hearing the news of the man's death — just kept shopping. The same thing happened again in 2011 when shoppers walked over a 61-year-old man's collapsed body at a Target store in West Virginia.

According to blackfridaydeathcount.com — a morbid website that tallies the number of deaths and injuries related to Black Friday shopping events — there have been seven deaths and 90 injuries recorded since 2006. It's sickening to think that we've come to accept tragedies as just another part of this annual ritualistic display of mass consumption.

Blackfridaydeathcount.com

There have been seven deaths and 90 injuries recorded since 2006.

Why do we continue to support a tradition that puts a price on a human life, especially when that dollar amount is a mere $35 off a Blu-ray player?

Sorry to get a bit sentimental, but what I really want for Christmas this year doesn't have a price tag on it. I want us all to start acting less greedy and much more humane. I want to live in a world where, if people see a man fall, they help him get back up rather than brutally crushing him to death as they lunge at 2-for-1 Lego box sets.

Watching clips of savage shoppers mauling one another in the electronics aisle, I find myself wishing that this time of year could look more like the feel-good opening montage from Love Actually rather than a climactic scene from The Hunger Games.

Follow Jessica Napier on Twitter @MetroSheSays

ZOOM

Satan Claus is coming to town

SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

Empty stockings should be the least of your fears

Revellers in Austria wear demon outfits while girls dress as angels prior to the annual Krampus night. The event honours Krampus — who, according to folklore, is the demon-like companion of St. Nicholas — who whips bad children with birch branches. METRO

Devil-may-scare

Krampus is represented by a hand-carved wooden mask with animal horns, a suit made from sheep or goat skin and large cow bells attached to the waist. In recent years, Tyrol has seen the founding of village Krampus associations with up to 100 members each who parade without St. Nicholas at Krampus events in November and early December.
METRO

Krampus's pagan roots

- The European practice of donning beast-like costumes and performing folk plays can be traced back thousands of years to pagan times. Among the most common figures in these rituals were Old Man Winter and the horned Goat-Man — archetypes now found in the forms of St. Nicholas/Santa Claus, and the devil, a.k.a. Krampus.
- Since the 1800s, Krampus has been emblazoned on festive greeting cards, often with the message "Grüß Vom Krampus" ("Greetings from Krampus"). In this way, the Krampus acquired a campy, Santa-ized quality. In 2004, comics publisher Monte Beauchamp reintroduced Krampus cards to America nearly a century after their heyday.

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

Whether it's the holidays or vacations that have you squeezed for cash, December can be the perfect month to stay inside. Here's three games that should serve you well:

Lords of Waterdeep:

Build a network of agents and recruit adventurers to climb the ladder of power in Waterdeep, all while racing against your rival lords. Developed by Playdek, the simple mechanics and smooth multiplayer make it just the latest in an embarrassment of board game riches available on the App Store. A note to new players: The AI is merciless. Play through the tutorial and take your game to some human competition. (iOS/$6.99)

Plague Inc:

Richly supported with updates since its 2012 release, the developers of this death-to-humanity strategy sim have just dropped a new scenario. Choose the country where you would like your pet pathogen to infect its first victims, then hone its lethal skills and hopefully watch it spread to take its place among history's most effective plagues. (iOS, Android/$0.99)

Mikey Shorts:

If you're looking for a time-waster that's a little less , the price has dropped on the excellent Mikey Shorts from $0.99 to a crowd-pleasing zero cents. It's a simple sidescrolling runner that owes more than a little debt to Super Mario Bros. and just as addictive. (iOS/Free)

SCREENGRAB

Letters

Where's the Black Friday reporting?
I noticed while reading the Metro that there was zero reporting about the ridiculous behavior of people during Black Friday shopping. I was hoping considering last week's papers were bursting with flyers, full and extended pages of ads, that you would report **anything** about the injuries or deaths caused by selfish shoppers. Instead, nothing. I guess it's easier to take money for Black Friday advertising than give an opinion on the reprehensible human behavior that comes with it.
Brian George Bowes, Toronto

Twitter

Suspended Senator Patrick Brazeau gets a gig with political satire mag Frank. What other kinds of work should he take on?

@FrenchmanCanada: He tried boxing and that didn't work really well. He should try wrestling, his twitter handle would make a great name: @TheBrazman

@KevinCHamilton: I think a career in satire really is the best thing for such an absurd person. Easier to explain away the crazy things he says.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: calgaryletters@metronews.ca

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DVD review

The Hangover Trilogy

Director. Todd Phillips

Stars. Zach Galifianakis, Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms

●●●○○

Any definition of the law of diminishing returns should in future simply have an arrow pointing to the cover of this triple set. The Hangover arrived in 2009 as a hilarious original comedy/mystery directed by Todd Phillips and starring Bradley Cooper, Zach Galifianakis, Ed Helms and Justin Bartha. The high-concept story had the four actors as bachelor party attendees on a Vegas bender. Three of them awaken from a night of drunken frolics to discover the fourth guy, the groom, MIA and possibly in danger. Wacky clues and bizarre antics enliven their search, which did boffo box office biz. A sequel was a given, but few could have predicting the rinse-and-repeat rip that was The Hangover Part II in 2011, which essentially replayed the story in a more exotic locale, Bangkok. Expectations were low for The Hangover Part III this past summer, and those expectations were met. Phillips thankfully ditched the drunk-and-hunt plot, replacing it with a crime angle (John Goodman plays an angry gangster). But he also dumped most of the laughs. The first film remains good enough to almost forgive the two weak sequels.

PETER HOWELL

Climb every mountain

The Sound of Music Live! Time is ticking for the cast of NBC's live production — a feat not attempted in more than 50 years

Carrie Underwood stars in The Sound of Music Live! on Thursday.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maria, former would-be nun, is about to get married.

Starring as Maria in NBC's new version of The Sound of Music, Carrie Underwood is clad in her own T-shirt and leggings plus a wedding veil as she reverently steps through the bare-bones Manhattan rehearsal space while three dozen castmates, on their feet as if in church, sing How do you solve a problem like Maria?

Underwood's procession ends at the "altar" (marked by a music stand) to join her groom, Capt. von Trapp, played by jeans-and-sweater-sporting Stephen Moyer.

During this preliminary run-through a few weeks ago, much work clearly remained to get The Sound of Music Live! ready for airtime on Thursday, when it, along with everyone involved, will make history: More than a half-century has passed since a broadcast network has dared to mount a full-scale musical for live TV.

It would have been risky enough revisiting this Rodgers and Hammerstein classic on any terms. But this is no remake of the not-to-be-tampered-with Julie Andrews juggernaut, declares Neil Meron. Meron and longtime partner Craig Zadan are the telecast's Oscar-winning executive producers.

Instead, The Sound of Music Live! is the 1959 Broadway musical reimagined for TV, then given extra crackle with a live presentation.

Meron's message: Everybody knows The Sound of Music, or thinks they do from the 1965 film nearly everyone has seen. But relatively few fans are acquainted with the stage original. Drawing from it, The Sound of Music Live! is meant to feel familiar, yet at the same time come across as new and different.

Consider: Moyer with castmates Laura Benanti (as Baroness Elsa Schrader) and Christian Borle (as Max Detweiler) are rehearsing a couple of weeks later a saucy song titled How Can Love Survive? This song will be brand-new to most viewers of the telecast — it was dropped from the movie.

"Plenty of nothing you haven't got. How can love survive?" Max tunefully teases the wealthy Elsa, who, in her posh relationship with her fiance, Capt. von Trapp, can never count theirs among "all the famous love affairs (where) lovers starve and snuggle."

This number, sung to an instrumental track recorded by a 40-piece orchestra, takes place on the sumptuous von Trapp terrace, complete with a fountain and a panoramic view of the Alps.

There are still no costumes — at the moment, Borle is wearing jeans and a Batman T-shirt — but by now the entire production has redeployed to a cavernous Long Island, N.Y., soundstage.

Grumman Studios' Stage 3, with square footage rivaling a football field's, is now home to the terrace, along with five neighbouring sets evoking pre-Second World War Austria including the abbey, a festival site draped with huge swastikas and the summit over which (spoiler alert) Maria, the Captain and his seven children pass to flee the Nazis at the musical's conclusion.

This will mark Carrie Underwood's first time in a major acting role. Despite her status as a multiplatinum country music superstar who rose to fame as the winner of American Idol in 2005, she is a rookie compared to the other stage veterans.

"Carrie is one of the bravest artists we've ever worked with," says Meron, who notes that she arrived two weeks before the production's six-week rehearsal began with her lines fully memorized, to get a head start.

"Every day," she says during a break, "I feel like I discover new things and how to go places in acting that I didn't think I could go."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Where to watch it

- **Citytv.** The Sound of Music Live! airs on Thursday at 8 p.m. EST.
- **NBC.** Also begins the live show at 8 p.m. EST

SCENE

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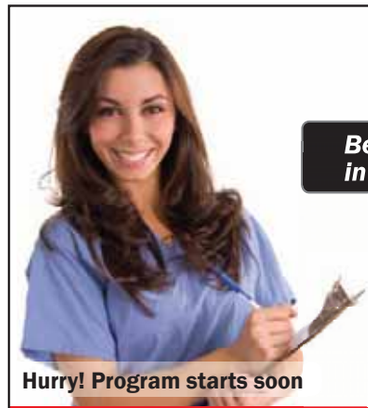

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Gerry Dee is lonely at the head of the class

Light on Canadian laughs. Star of Mr. D holds out hope that more scripted comedies are on tap

CBC sitcom star Gerry Dee is feeling a bit lonely.

The standup comic-turned-TV personality says there aren't enough Canuck comedies on the tube and it's especially tough for half-hour laughers to find success.

Dee says he was disappointed to see CTV's Satisfaction conclude after just one season, but is hopeful for upcoming arrivals, including CTV's Dave Foley project, Spun Out.

"If we keep having shows cancelled it's certainly not incentive for networks to go, 'Let's keep doing this,'" Dee said at a recent CBC event to launch its winter lineup, including Dee's Mr. D.

"We've got to get these shows more successful and keep them on the air. Because otherwise Canadian comedies are going to go by the wayside and they're going to hire American shows."

Dee notes that his high school comedy Mr. D is the only scripted sitcom on CBC's winter schedule. But he understands why the public broadcaster might be more willing to gamble on an hour-long drama or reality show than a quirky sitcom.

He notes that comedy is inherently subjective, while "drama is drama."

"People aren't talking about comedies, they're talking about dramas. They're the ones that bring the numbers in," he says, adding he's glad to see City's recent half-hour arrivals Package Deal and Seed.

"Comedy is not easy and I think the people that run these other shows are finding that, too. The numbers aren't great on any of the comedies in this country. And when the numbers are low, you get cancelled and that's the pressure we have on a weekly basis."

Dee's Mr. D co-star Darrin Rose is among several comics with development deals for prospective sitcoms. Rose's CTV venture Chasing Manhood is an ensemble comedy inspired by his stand-up material.

Quoted

"We've got to get these shows more successful and keep them on the air."

Gerry Dee on the state of Canadian scripted comedy

The network says it's also considering the 20-something comedy We're Adults Now, from Kids In the Hall member and Less Than Kind showrunner Mark McKinney; a multi-cam friends comedy called The Team from Little Mosque on the Prairie writer Rob Sheridan; the half-hour dramedy The Lainey Gossip Project inspired by eTalk correspondent Elaine Lui's celebrity website LaineyGossip.com; and untitled projects from Corner Gas writer Paul Mather and Community scribe Vera Santamaria.

Over on Global, hopes are high for the green-lit comedy Working the Engels, with Andrea Martin and Benjamin Arthur as members of a debt-laden family who take over the deceased dad's storefront law firm.

Gerry Dee says there are plenty of changes in store in the new season of Mr. D, which starts in February. CONTRIBUTED

Mr. D kicks off its third season in February with several changes in store, says Dee.

This time around, the bumbling Gerry gets a shot at teaching phys-ed and is excited to finally be in his element. But of course, nothing really goes well for him, says Dee, who serves as both showrunner and star.

"He just knows his stuff in phys-ed, (but) it doesn't make him a good teacher," he notes.

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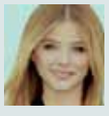
You had me at merengue: Will Renee dance her way onto reality television?

Renee Zellwegger

Renee Zellwegger may be heading to television — and not in the way you'd expect. The actress is being considered by producers of Dancing with the Stars to head up a season of competitors made up of Oscar winners, according to Radar Online. "The producers are fixated on Renee in part because she hasn't done much dancing at all since Chicago more than 10 years ago, and there's this real mystery about her and what she's up to," a source says. "They keep raising the amount of money they are willing to give her in the hopes that she'll say yes, and the theory is that if they can get her to sign on, then it would attract some other really prominent Oscar-winning stars — who wouldn't normally do reality TV — to fall in step."

Twitter

@ladygaga
Rolled around Tokyo today, made it to my favorite shop. They asked me to paint a leather (an epic pastime of mine)



@ChloeGMoretz
had a weird dream after watching the new hunger games that i picked up archery and was like a championship archer. weird. need to buy a bow.

@jeremypiven
The good news is we are alive and not defined by our favorite sports teams (he said sobbing like a grandmother on the floor)

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Two familiar faces come out to the social media sphere

PAT HEALY
Metro World News

British Olympic diver Tom Daley and actress Maria Bello took to different forms of media this weekend to reveal new same-sex relationships in two heart-felt confessionals.

Daley took to YouTube to officially come out, telling fans that he has been dating a man for most of this year.

"This has been a hard decision to make, but I wanted you to hear this from me," the 19-year-old athlete says in his video. "In spring this year my life changed massively when I met someone, and they make me feel so happy, so safe, and everything just feel great. That someone is a guy. It did take me by surprise a little bit. It was always in my head that something like that could happen, but it wasn't until spring this year that things just clicked. It felt right and I thought, 'OK,' and my whole world changed there and then."

Meanwhile, Bello came out in a first-person essay in the New York Times' Modern Love titled, Coming Out as a Modern Family. "She was one of the most beautiful, charming, brilliant and funny people I had ever met, but it didn't occur to me, until that soul-searching moment in my garden, that we could perhaps choose to love each other romantically," she wrote about finding her new girlfriend, Clare. Soon, the two "began the long, painful, wonderful process of trying to figure out what our relationship was supposed to be."

Jackson, Bello's 12-year-old son from a previous relationship, took his mother's new relationship in stride. When she told him about Clare, "He looked at me for what seemed like an eternity and then broke into a huge, warm smile. 'Mom, love is love, whatever you are,'" she wrote.

Paul Walker

Investigation into Walker's death unearthing unsettling details: TMZ

Details continue to emerge about the car wreck that killed Fast and Furious actor Paul Walker and his business partner, Roger Rodas, on Saturday. TMZ.com reports that cops are looking into the possibility that Walker and Rodas were drag racing when their Porsche exploded after first hitting a tree and then a lamppost. The area where they died is a well-known racing strip. In fact, the site reports that fans are "doing dangerous burn-outs, donuts and other high speed stunts" at the death site in memoriam of Walker. Meanwhile, production for Fast and Furious 7 "won't be scrapped," sources close to the production tell The Hollywood Reporter. The production has been underway in Atlanta, taking a break for the Thanksgiving holiday, and was scheduled to head to Abu Dhabi in January. Sources say production will be "delayed" as director James Wan and studio executives figure out how to re-work the project and "how to proceed in a manner that would be respectful to Walker's death."

LIFE 3

What cha' know about the not-so-new tea trend matcha?

Good for you. It's been called the Superman of green tea, but what exactly does it do to help you in your day-to-day life?

MAJA LUNDAGER PEDERSEN
Metro World News

One hundred thirty times — that's how much the super-trendy, super-old Japanese matcha tea is supposed to beat regular green tea with when it comes to antioxidants. But what does that really mean? And is there a purpose for including a teaspoon of the — some would say not exactly tasty — matcha powder?

"I definitely think matcha can help prevent (illnesses) and keep you healthy when it comes to diseases," says Rachel Berman, dietitian and health content manager for About.com.

Matcha is a green tea and research shows that the antioxidants (more precisely, catechins) in it reduce the risk of cancer. Furthermore, green tea contains serotonin, which can help reduce stress and work as a mood enhancer. Last but certainly not least, it can help increase metabolism. But Berman is hesitant to tout it as a cure-all.

"I wouldn't necessarily say, 'Drink green tea and you will lose weight,'" she says. "The amount of calories you may burn won't make up for having a cheeseburger at lunch."

One of the reasons why matcha is making waves more than normal green tea is the way it's brewed.

"Matcha is a powder and it's the entire leaf, versus brewing leaves in water, which won't give you as much of the health benefits," the dietitian tells us.

Matcha contains caffeine, too, and Berman doesn't recommend going over four or five cups a day, or drinking it past 5 p.m.

"Just incorporate it as a substitute for a mid-afternoon soda or coffee," she says.

The conclusion must be that matcha is worth a try, but one question still remains. Why has a tea that's been around since the 12th century become so popular now?

"I think that people are looking for ways to improve their diet any way possible," Berman says. "Certain foods go in and out of trend all the time, so maybe people are looking for a way to get antioxidants since there has been so much research about how good green tea is. Why not have the one that is even more powerful than just regular green tea?"

Making sense of matcha

If you find this wonder tea a tiny bit too expensive, Berman recommends you instead ask for a really high quality of green tea. You will probably get a lot of the same benefits from it, she says.

- **Where is it grown?** Matcha only grows in Japan.
- **Why drink it?** It's known as a mood enhancer because of its amino acid content.
- **Pricey?** The softer matcha is, the more expensive it is.

Add a little matcha to your afternoon delight. ALL PHOTOS ISTOCK IMAGES

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Want to watch your weight? Keep your home very toasty

Body science. New research flips common thinking on its head as they find a healthy body weight is linked to those who live in warmer homes

MEREDITH ENGEL
Metro World News

The secret to keeping your figure during the holidays may have nothing to do with your dinner plate.

Researchers at the University of Stirling Behavioural Science Centre in Scotland have found that people living in well-heated homes have lower BMIs (body mass indices) levels than those in the Northern Hemisphere without adequate heating.

The scientists studied 10,000 people with central heating over a 13-year period.

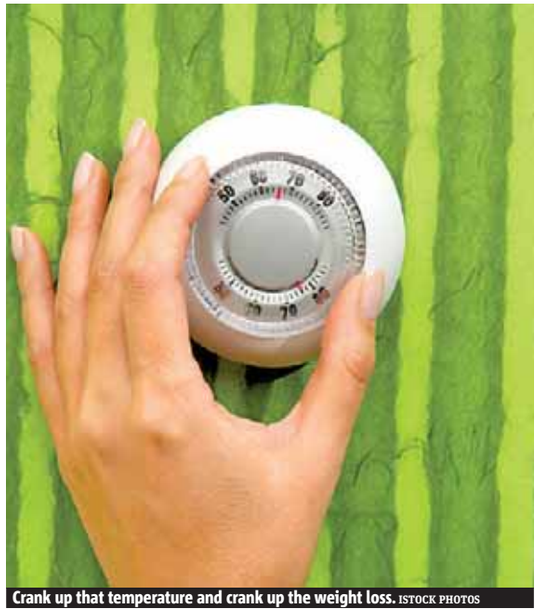
Their research, they say — which included age, gender, social class and other factors — turns a popular notion on its head.

"We set out to investigate the scientific claims that cooler indoor temperatures help us maintain a healthy weight by pushing our bodies to expend more energy through shivering and generating heat through tissues," says behavioral scientist and senior lecturer Dr. Michael Daly.

"In fact, the research suggests people may eat less and burn more energy when residing in a warmer indoor environment."

So what's the magic number for your thermostat?

"We … found reduced weight levels among people living in homes heated to above 73.4 degrees Fahrenheit (23 Celsius)," Dr. Daly says of the research.

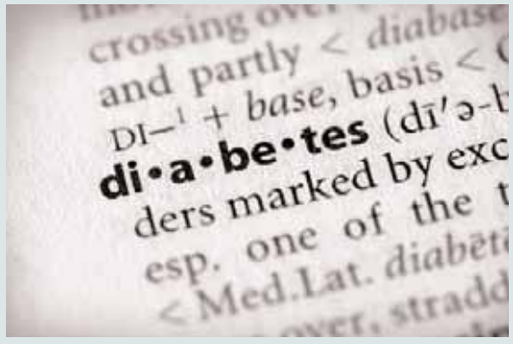


Crank up that temperature and crank up the weight loss. ISTOCK PHOTOS

Best Health

Do you know the difference in diabetes?

BEST HEALTH MINUTE
Bonnie Munday
Editor-in-chief
Best Health Magazine



More than nine million Canadians, or one in four, are living with diabetes or prediabetes, and the number is expected to rise to one in three by 2020. Many people don't realize that there is a big difference between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. In the November/December issue of Best Health, we asked Dr. Jan Jux, chief scientific advisor of the Canadian Diabetes Association, to explain.

Type 1

About 10 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 1. Although its cause remains unknown, people who have a family history of diabetes are considered at a higher risk of developing it. It usually begins in childhood and occurs when the body is unable to produce insulin, a hormone that controls the level of glucose in the blood.

Those affected require insulin therapy, which is injected by pen, syringe or pump. People with Type 1 diabetes have to keep their blood-glucose levels in the target range. To measure levels, they can use a portable glucose meter that usually works by pricking a fingertip to draw a drop of blood. Until a cure is found, this is a lifelong process.

Type 2

This is the most common type of diabetes: Among Canadians with the disease, approximately 90 per cent are affected by Type 2, which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body does not effectively use the insulin it produces. As a result, sugar builds up in the blood instead of being used for energy. Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adulthood, although increasing numbers of children and adolescents are being diagnoses.

People with Type 2 diabetes may be prescribed medications, and may also have to monitor their blood-glucose levels. While a healthy lifestyle is beneficial for everyone, it is especially important for people who are at high risk for diabetes because of inherited factors. Increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, eating whole grains, limiting portion size and increasing physical activity to maintain a healthy weight may reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes.

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Huevos Rancheros: Brunch in Mexico without leaving home

This recipe serves two. COURTESY PRESIDENT'S CHOICE

Huevos Rancheros is a popular Mexican breakfast or brunch dish consisting of eggs.

Using egg whites instead of whole eggs in traditional egg dishes such as Huevos Rancheros saves you cholesterol, fat and calories. They also cook up fluffier than whole scrambled eggs.

1. In medium nonstick frying pan, melt butter over medium heat; cook onion for 4 to 6 minutes or until softened. In large bowl, whisk egg whites until very frothy; whisk in salt and pepper and add to pan with onions. Cook for 2 to 4 minutes, occasionally lifting eggs and allowing uncooked egg white to flow underneath, or until egg is set on bottom.

2. Meanwhile, in small saucepan cook salsa, tomatoes and beans over medium heat until hot.

3. Sprinkle cheese over eggs and turn egg whites over, scrambling them slightly. Divide cooked egg whites between two dinner plates. Top with salsa mixture. Sprinkle with coriander. Serve with warmed whole wheat tortillas, if desired.

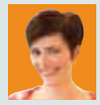
COURTESY PRESIDENT'S CHOICE

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped red onion
- 1 cup (250 ml) PC Blue Menu Egg Whites
- 1/8 tsp (0.5 ml) each salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2/3 cup (150 ml) PC Avocado and Key Lime Salsa
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) quartered cherry tomatoes
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) rinsed and drained canned black beans
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) light cheddar shredded cheese
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh coriander

Health Solutions

Mr. Sunflower, bring me butter



NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

Sunflower butter is not made from a nut. It is a seed, which makes it school approved. (Sometimes. You better check!)

Sunflower seeds are mildly anti-inflammatory due to their high mineral and antioxidant content but without sugar, the spread can be a tiny bit more bitter than the more typical peanut butter.

Fear not, here are some ways to enjoy it:

- Spread with honey and banana to provide a balanced snack.
- Dip dried fruit into a tablespoonful.
- Use in place of peanut butter in cookie recipes. You will not notice the difference.
- Add to smoothies to bump up protein and good fats.
- Use in place of tahini for making hummus.

Each time you add a different food, you are adding different nutrients, and your body needs a wide range of every kind.

Go beyond wheat crackers and try quinoa or brown rice crackers to balance out the amino acids. Pairing a nut or seed with a whole grain makes a complete protein. Be brave!

THERESA ALBERT IS A FOOD COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST AND PRIVATE NUTRITIONIST IN TORONTO. SHE IS @THERESAALBERT ON TWITTER AND FOUND DAILY AT MYFRIENDINFOOD.COM

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Cauliflower-Bell Pepper Quiche cuts calories

You might be ready to take it easy before the rush of holiday calories. If so, this brunch or dinner dish is for you.

The simple, low-carb, high-flavour "quiche" calls for no grains, no gluten and no heavy lifting.

The whole thing is cooked in a single skillet and requires only a few minutes of hands-on time. The "crust" is made from caramelized cauliflower florets, but actually any number of other vegetables could be substituted.

This quiche also can be seasoned however you like. Curry powder would be great, as would smoked paprika and cumin. And if you like it spicy, add some chopped jalapenos to the mix.

This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 5 cups small cauliflower florets (about 1 head)
- 1 large red bell pepper, cored and chopped
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 8 egg whites (or 1 1/2 cups pasteurized egg whites)
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/3 cup fat-free crumbled feta cheese

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Coat the pan with cooking spray, then add the cauliflower florets and bell pepper, arranging them in an even layer. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, without stirring, for 3 minutes.

2. Stir to turn the florets, then let them cook another 3 minutes without moving them. Once the florets are evenly browned, cover the pan and cook another 3 to 4 minutes.

3. In a bowl, mix together the egg whites, thyme and garlic. Pour evenly over the vegetables, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover the pan and cook for 3 minutes.

4. Sprinkle the feta over the quiche, then cover again and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes, or until the eggs are completely cooked. Season with salt and pepper.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What's growing in your veggie drawer? A big pile of potential monthly savings

Home economics. Get to know the inside of your refrigerator, and you'll find it's easier to use up leftover food

YOUR MONEY
Alison Griffiths
money@metronews.ca

My oldest daughter, Claudia, who just gave birth to grandson number two, has been coping with all the usual challenges — spit ups, endless laundry and sleepless nights. However, as she burps, rocks, changes and does it all again, a happy fact has emerged. She is saving money.

A drop in income during maternity leave usually places tremendous financial pressure on young families. However, my daughter triumphantly reported that her family of four is in better financial shape than ever before. And it's largely because of the refrigerator.

During those sleepless pat pat, jig jig, feed, change and rock-for-hours nights, she started organizing the fridge. There she discovered a cornucopia of meals. Veggies, fruit, leftovers and bits of this and that stored in the fridge or freezer started her thinking about using it all up before the green fuzzies or freezer burn attacked.

What started out as something to kill time when she couldn't sleep turned into a habit of fridge and freezer cruising. Once she got the hang of coming up with meals based on items she had on hand, the habit quickly became ingrained. As a result, she finds it far easier to put together dinner, no matter how tired she is, and she's discovered all kinds of new ways to use a cup of rice or a few slices of ham. In fact, in the nearly two months since baby George arrived they haven't resorted to takeout once. Even better, neither she nor her husband feels deprived. Far from it. They feel empowered, as in, "I am in control of my fridge!"

Perhaps best of all, waste has been reduced to almost nothing, which in turn has taken a nice bite out of the grocery expenditures. Claudia figures she is saving around $200 a month. An Internet search turns up hundreds of excellent leftover ideas. One of the best resources is bigoven.com/recipes/leftover. Choose up to three ingredients or flavours and a host of recipes appear. I picked bell pepper, brown rice and black beans, which resulted in some terrific ideas to use up three items in my fridge.

Most of us have a group of ingredients that regularly end up as leftovers, eventually to be thrown out. With an arsenal of recipes that use those ingredients, it will become fairly easy to whip up an eco-friendly, money-saving meal. Eat and save money! Thanks Claudia.

Looking for leftovers

What started out as something to kill time when she couldn't sleep turned into a habit of fridge and freezer cruising.

When you spend time going through your refrigerator and freezer, you're more likely to actually use up the food you've bought before it goes bad. ISTOCK

Different types

OMG: The truth about boredom

When dozing off in a classroom or office, you may think it's your fault but you would be wrong. There are clear categories of boredom triggered by your environment, says German pioneering researcher Dr. Thomas Goetz.

Indifferent boredom: A relaxing, possibly positive type – "a general indifference to, and withdrawal from, the external world"
Calibrating boredom: Wandering thoughts – "general openness to changing the situation"
Apathetic boredom: Impossible to break from this mode – "dangerous, similar to depression"
KIERON MONKS/METRO

Why you so bored? ISTOCK

Managing meltdowns: Tips on tackling your kids' Xmas tantrums

Match expectations. If you mean business with them at home, don't change a thing when you all go to the mall together

With the arrival of the holiday season comes the inevitable spike in shopping excursions and social gatherings — and with them, potential opportunities for children to act out. Navigating through crowded aisles and packed parking lots can be stressful enough. But contending with a youngster having a meltdown in the mall is enough to fray the nerves of even the most mild-mannered parent.

"Tantrums are about power struggles and attention," said Natalia McPhedran, an Ottawa-based children's coach and author of Life With Kids — Empowering Our Children To Be Ready For The Real World, due out in December. "If we use techniques at home that avoid the power struggles, I think that you're halfway there by the time you get to the mall because they know: 'OK, Mom means business.'"

McPhedran — a mother of two — outlines expectations prior to a shopping trip. That includes specifying the purpose of the visit to ensure youngsters don't get sidetracked.

"For example: 'Today, we're just going to get this and this and this. Don't even ask me for chocolates, don't ask me for toys. You can look, but you can't touch, because today we're not buying that,'" said McPhedran. "If you're consistent with following through with other things at home, they know that you mean business when you say something.

"You've already given them that pre-set expectation at home. When they get to the mall, they know that you're also going to follow through there." Once kids know the expectations, McPhedran said it's still good to have rules making kids aware of what they can do.

"Once you get there, let's say: 'Let's go in the toy aisle and let's go and look at all the cool stuff they have. Tell me what you like and we'll see what Santa can do,'" she said. "I remember we used to walk through the toy section of Zellers when I was little and we never walked out with stuff every time we went." In the event a tearful tantrum still ensues, McPhedran said the source of unhappiness is usually due to one of three things: hunger, fatigue or a desire to be heard. Rather than reacting in anger to the outburst, she suggested an alternative approach.

Even if they freak out, you should remain calm at all times. ISTOCK

"You have to keep your calm as well. Because if you freak out also, then that just gives them even more attention and more people look," said McPhedran, mother to an 11-year-old daughter and nine-year-old son. "Come down to their level, calmly say: 'We are not having this right now.'"

McPhedran said adults should recognize their child's feelings, such as those of anger at parents for not purchasing a particular item. But they should then remind kids of initial pre-warning that buying goods for them wasn't a part of the day's agenda. Similarly, when it comes to attending a party or family gathering, establishing and articulating ground rules beforehand is pivotal.

"If they know what to expect and they know what you expect of them, then the behaviour should just follow," said McPhedran. "Before I leave the house, I would say: 'Listen, make your aunts and uncles proud. Show them that you know how to behave when you go to (an event) like this. And make yourself proud.'"
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Semyon Varlamov

Avs goalie remains free on bond

Colorado goalie Semyon Varlamov can remain free on bond while facing a domestic violence charge involving his girlfriend, a judge said Monday. The judge advised him to face a misdemeanour charge of third-degree assault. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Curling

Albertans have solid 2nd day at Olympic trials

And then there was one.

Val Sweeting, the 26-year-old skip from Vegreville, Alta., knocked off four-time Scotties winner Jennifer Jones on Monday night to claim sole possession of first place at the Canadian Olympic curling trials in Winnipeg.

But she says her young squad isn't going to drop that underdog moniker just yet.

"We still like to think we are," said Sweeting, who curls out of Edmonton.

On the men's side, Jeff Stoughton made a great shot to tie their game but it wasn't enough as Edmonton's Kevin Martin extended his winning streak to two games. That puts Stoughton in a must-win situation for the rest of the tournament.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kevin Martin THE CANADIAN PRESS

Minnesota defenceman Mathew Dumba, a Calgary native, was the lone NHLer named to Hockey Canada's selection camp Monday. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Small roster a 'huge advantage': Sutter

World junior tournament. Team Canada's coach happy to have just 25 players listed for selection camp

The biggest challenge in coaching any national hockey team, says Brent Sutter, is forming an identity quickly.

"What you're about as a team, how you're going to play, the accountability has to fall into it right off the bat," Sutter said.

And so for Sutter the fact that Hockey Canada has named its smallest roster ever — just 25 players — to its national junior selection camp is a "huge advantage." It allows him to coach and instill that identity from the get-go, he said, rather than spend time evaluating players.

"You can run proper practices, you can just get things implemented and get going more with your team," said Sutter, head coach of Canada's world junior team.

"It's a change, it's certainly different than in the past where it's been mid-30s or over, the amount of players that have been invited. But you know what? It's good. It wouldn't have been done this way if there wasn't a real clear direction of path."

Minnesota Wild defenceman Mathew Dumba was the lone NHL player named Monday to a roster that Sutter called a "moving target." He's holding out hope that more NHL teams will release players before the deadline, such as Calgary Flames centre Sean Monahan, who's out with a fractured left foot. Countries must submit their rosters on Christmas Day, 12 hours before the tournament in Malmö, Sweden, begins.

Two goaltenders — Zachary Fucale and Jake Paterson — plus eight defencemen and 15 forwards have been invited to the selection camp opening Dec. 12 in Toronto.

This national junior team shoulders perhaps more pressure than any team before, since last year marked the first time in 15 years the Canadians didn't bring home a medal. Canada hasn't won world junior gold since 2009.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

4 SPORTS

The Seahawks' Cliff Avril forces Saints quarterback Drew Brees to fumble Monday in Seattle. The Seahawks recovered the ball and scored a touchdown on the play. JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES

Seahawks march past Saints, clinch playoff berth

NFL. Wilson tosses 3 touchdowns while Brees struggles

The rest of the NFC better get ready to visit the Pacific Northwest in January. After Monday night's rout, the road through the NFC playoffs is almost certain to go through Seattle.

Russell Wilson threw for 310 yards and three touchdowns, and the Seattle Seahawks became the first team to clinch a spot in the NFC playoffs with a 34-7 victory over the New Orleans Saints on Monday night.

More important than just clinching a spot in the post-season, the Seahawks (11-1) moved two games ahead on the rest of the NFC in the race for home-field advantage and hold the tiebreakers over New Orleans (9-3) and Carolina (9-3), the two closest pursuers.

Monday Night Football

Seahawks	Saints
34	7

Wilson was outstanding, picking apart the Saints' defence. He threw touchdown passes of two yards to Zach Miller and four yards to Doug Baldwin in the first half as Seattle built a 27-7 lead. Wilson added a pinball eight-yard TD pass to Derrick Coleman in the third quarter.

Michael Bennett had a 22-yard fumble return for a touchdown in the first quarter to give Seattle a 10-0 lead and the Saints never threatened.

Wilson completed 22 of 30 passes and finished with a quarterback rating of 139.6. He has 22 regular-season wins in his first two seasons, tied for the most ever by a second-year QB.

Saints quarterback Drew Brees finished 23 of 38 for 147 yards and a touchdown.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

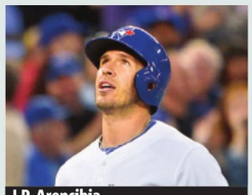
MLB

Blue Jays part ways with Arencibia

Catcher J.P. Arencibia was non-tendered by the Toronto Blue Jays on Monday night, making him a free agent.

The move comes hours after Toronto signed free agent catcher Dioner Navarro to a two-year deal worth $8 million US.

Arencibia had a .194 batting average last season with 21 home runs and 55 RBIs. The 27-year-old struck out 148 times in 2013, 15th most in Major League Baseball.


J.P. Arencibia
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

Navarro hit .300 with a career-high 13 home runs in 89 games for the Chicago Cubs last season. He also had 34 runs batted in.

The Blue Jays also tendered contracts to centre-fielder Colby Rasmus, all-star left-handed pitcher Brett Cecil and right-handed pitcher Esmil Rogers. All three are arbitration-eligible players.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	27	18	7	2	75	55	38
Montreal	28	16	9	3	76	59	35
Detroit	28	14	7	7	78	73	35
Tampa Bay	26	16	9	1	76	66	33
Toronto	27	14	10	3	75	73	31
Ottawa	27	10	13	4	78	90	24
Florida	27	7	15	5	59	91	19
Buffalo	28	6	20	2	48	85	14

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	28	18	9	1	86	64	37
Washington	27	14	11	2	82	78	30
NY Rangers	28	14	14	0	62	71	28
New Jersey	28	11	12	5	61	67	27
Philadelphia	27	12	13	2	57	65	26
Carolina	27	10	12	5	57	78	25
Columbus	27	10	14	3	67	80	23
NY Islanders	27	8	15	4	72	93	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	28	20	4	4	102	76	44
St. Louis	25	18	4	3	89	57	39
Colorado	25	19	6	0	76	52	38
Minnesota	29	16	8	5	70	67	37
Winnipeg	29	13	12	4	78	82	30
Nashville	27	13	11	3	62	75	29
Dallas	25	12	9	4	70	73	28

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
San Jose	26	18	3	5	92	60	41
Anaheim	29	18	7	4	91	77	40
Los Angeles	27	16	7	4	70	58	36
Phoenix	26	15	7	4	85	84	34
Vancouver	29	14	10	5	77	77	33
Calgary	26	9	13	4	70	93	22
Edmonton	28	9	17	2	73	95	20

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Monday's results
Winnipeg 5 NY Rangers 2
Montreal 3 New Jersey 2
Minnesota 2 Philadelphia 0
St. Louis at Los Angeles
Sunday's results
Vancouver 3 Carolina 2
Detroit 4 Ottawa 2
Edmonton 3 Dallas 2 (SO)
Tuesday's games
All Times Eastern
San Jose at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Columbus, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Washington, 7 p.m.
Pittsburgh at NY Islanders, 7 p.m.
Ottawa at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Vancouver at Nashville, 8 p.m.
Dallas at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at Anaheim, 10 p.m.
Wednesday's games
Montreal at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Detroit, 8 p.m.
Phoenix at Calgary, 10 p.m.
Thursday's games
Dallas at Toronto, 7 p.m.
San Jose at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
NY Rangers at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Winnipeg at Florida, 7:30 p.m.
Boston at Montreal, 7:30 p.m.
Ottawa at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Carolina at Nashville, 8 p.m.
NY Islanders at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Chicago at Minnesota, 8 p.m.
Colorado at Edmonton, 9:30 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pts
Crosby, Pgh	13	23	36
Malkin, Pgh	7	28	35
Steen, StL	20	11	31
Getzlaf, Ana	13	18	31
Kane, Chi	16	14	30
Tavares, NYI	11	19	30
Zetterberg, Det	11	19	30
Ovechkin, Wash	21	8	29
Perry, Ana	15	14	29
Thornton, SJ	4	25	29
H. Sedin, Van	7	21	28
Kunitz, Pgh	14	13	27
Couture, SJ	9	18	27
Karlsson, Ott	7	20	27

Not including last night's games

MLS PLAYOFFS

MLS CUP

Saturday's game — All Times Eastern
Kansas City vs. Salt Lake, 4 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

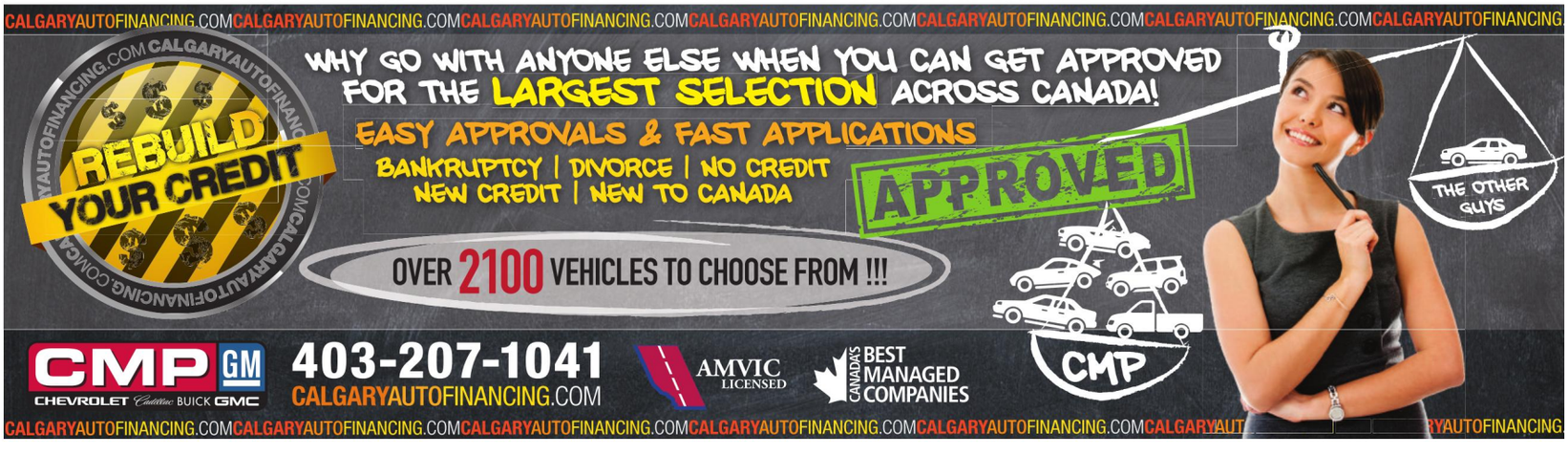
	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	16	1	.941	—
d-Miami	14	3	.824	2
Washington	9	9	.500	7½
d-Toronto	6	10	.375	9½
Atlanta	9	10	.474	8
Charlotte	8	10	.444	8½
Chicago	7	9	.438	8½
Detroit	7	10	.412	9
Boston	7	12	.368	10
Orlando	6	11	.353	10
Philadelphia	6	12	.333	10½
Cleveland	5	12	.294	11
Brooklyn	5	12	.294	11
New York	3	13	.188	12½
Milwaukee	3	13	.188	12½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	15	3	.833	—
d-Portland	14	3	.824	½
Oklahoma City	12	3	.800	1½
d-L.A. Clippers	12	6	.667	3
Houston	13	6	.684	2½
Denver	10	6	.625	4
Dallas	10	8	.556	5
Golden State	10	8	.556	5
Phoenix	9	8	.529	5½
New Orleans	9	8	.529	5½
Memphis	8	8	.500	6
L.A. Lakers	9	9	.500	6
Minnesota	9	10	.474	6½
Sacramento	4	11	.267	9½
Utah	4	15	.211	11½

d–division leader

Monday's results
Washington 98 Orlando 80
New Orleans 131 Chicago 128 3OT
San Antonio 102 Atlanta 100
Utah 109 Houston 103
Indiana at Portland
Tuesday's games
Orlando at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Denver at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Milwaukee at Boston, 7:30 p.m.
Detroit at Miami, 7:30 p.m.
Phoenix at Memphis, 8 p.m.
Charlotte at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Sacramento, 10 p.m.
Toronto at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
As the new moon falls in one of the more adventurous areas of your chart, you will take the kind of risk you might usually steer clear of. No doubt it will surprise a few people when it pays off handsomely.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
In all things there is a natural ebb and flow. If you are on the down side of the curve at the moment, you are sure to be on the up again by week's end.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Optimism is generally a good thing but too much can be dangerous. The planets warn you must make an effort to see things as they are today, not as how you dream they might be. That applies especially to partnership matters.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
If you change your mind about something today, you will most likely have to change it back again later in the week. Stick with the decision you recently made and see it through to the end. What happened to that resolute Cancer nature?

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Yours is one of the most favoured signs at the moment and today's new moon in your fellow Fire sign of Sagittarius urges you to cash in on your creative ideas.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
There are times when you let the mask of self-control slip and let your emotions get the better of you and that will most likely happen today. If it does, it may be to your benefit.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your energy may be high at the moment but don't burn yourself out. Social invitations will come over the next few days but you are under no obligation to says yes to any.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
The more you are told you can't have something, the more you will make a point of getting it. That could be fun but could also lead to situations that do you no favours. Don't let your desires get out of hand.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
As the new moon takes place in your birth sign, it is essential that you choose one aim and stick with it. This can be one of the most successful times of the year but don't scatter your energies in a dozen directions.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
There is no point trying to hide your feelings because others can see how you are hurting. What they don't understand though is why you are hurting. If you need help, you really must be honest with them.

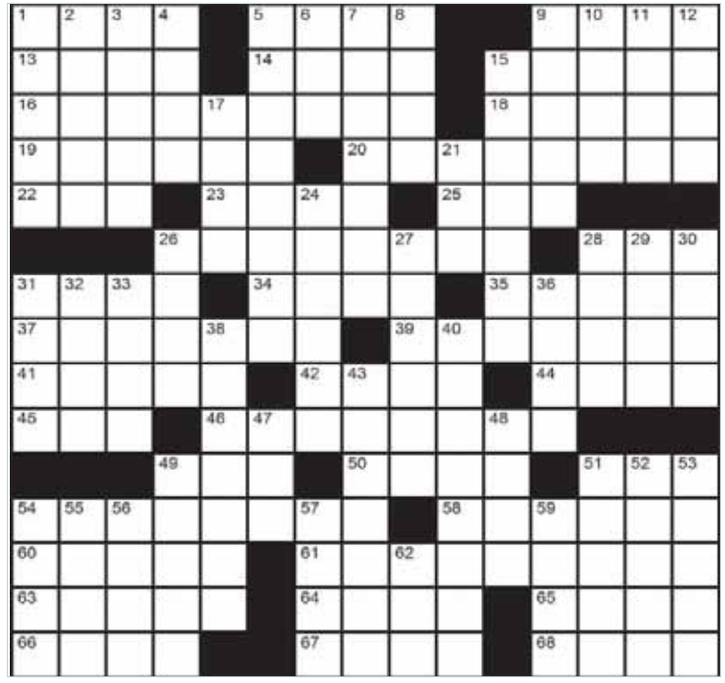
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The planets warn you need to watch what you say over the next 24 hours. Not everyone appreciates your directness and honesty, especially when it hurts them personally.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may be dreading upheavals on the work front but the planets suggest you have little to worry about. There will be some adjustments to make, but over time you will benefit. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across

1. Punt
5. '90s Halifax band
9. Britney Spears' new album: 'Britney __'
13. __ even keel: 2 wds.
14. Stratford-__-Avon
15. Ms. Berry
16. Potter's penner
18. "Golly!"
19. Anna Karenina's love in Leo Tolstoy's classic book
20. Shoppers __ __
22. Tonality
23. __ Admiral
25. Gambler's cube
26. "Hmm...": 3 wds.
28. Fred __ (Lyricist of Broadway musical Cabaret)
31. Swedish store
34. John who co-hosted "Entertainment Tonight"
35. "Like that'll happen!"
37. Fraser = _ _ __
39. Actress Ferrera
41. CTV journalist Ms. Ien
42. "__ _ help you?" (Store's query)
44. Kinds
45. Fathers of Jr.s
46. College in Ontario; or, actress Nicollette
49. Three non-consonants
50. Singer/songwriter Aimee
51. Grand __ (Wine designation)
54. Egypt: Kingly discovery back in '22: 2 wds.
58. Scratcher's reasons
60. Popeye's enemy
61. Traditional dwelling of the Iroquois
63. Tree type
64. Nine __ Nails
65. Mix
66. Mailing enclosures, e.g.
67. Green, in Gaspe
68. Xs

Down

1. '70s detective series
2. Linen tape for trimmings
3. Comedian Drew
4. Fort __, Kentucky
5. 'Our Pet': St. Vital, MB-born singer, Member of the Order of Canada as well as Canada's Walk of Fame
6. Prefix to 'culture' (Beekeeping)
7. England's capital, in France
8. Civil or Electrical, e.g.
9. Actress Ms. Pressly
10. __ Ostrovsky ("Hot in Cleveland" character)
11. Yankee or Oriole, e.g.
12. Tree dwelling
15. Cleanliness
17. Was alternative
21. 'Quiet' add-on
24. Punish with an arbitrary fine
26. Secular
27. Ms. Twain
28. Santana song: "__ Ways"
29. British guitarist Jeff
30. Cape Breton inland sea, __ d'Or Lake
31. Some PCs
32. Vehicle in "If I Had $1,000,000"
33. Makes mistakes
36. Ireland, in verse
38. Guest
40. One Direction's latest album: '__ Memories'
43. Ulna: 2 wds.
47. Boo-__
48. Literary collection [abbr.]
49. "Melrose Place" star Rob
51. Plane-jumper's need
52. Amber, for example
53. Device operators, for example
54. Time as yet unknown acronym [pl.]
55. Role in "The Producers" (2005)
56. Sassiness, in slang
57. 1054 in ancient Rome
59. Price
62. ATM maker

Yesterday's Crossword

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

7		1		5		2	9	
	5	9						
			1					8
4		2	5					
8			6		4			5
					8	3		9
5					3			
						5	1	
	3	8		1		9		6

Yesterday's Sudoku

2	4	6	3	5	8	7	1	9
7	1	3	2	9	4	6	5	8
5	8	9	7	6	1	2	4	3
3	5	1	4	2	6	8	9	7
9	7	4	1	8	3	5	2	6
8	6	2	5	7	9	1	3	4
1	9	5	6	3	7	4	8	2
6	2	8	9	4	5	3	7	1
4	3	7	8	1	2	9	6	5

Weather

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
MAX: -14° MIN: -14°	MAX: -15° MIN: -18°	MAX: -16° MIN: -27°

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